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ABSTRACT

Recent societal changes suggest that images of motherhood and fatherhood are changing and that a model of contemporary parenting is emerging which reflects men's significant involvement in parenting and women's significant involvement in providing for the family economically. This study collected data pertinent to this emerging model by investigating perceptions of preferred parenting responsibilities and community-based supports for parenting in dual-earner families with children and a comparison group of traditional single-earner families. Ratings of preferred parenting responsibility and community supports in nine parenting areas, from an ethnically diverse sample of dual-earner and traditional families (N=244), provided equivocal results for the model. Although there was a high preference for men's involvement and community support, women and men preferred that women take more responsibility than men. When asked with whom they would prefer to share parenting responsibilities, by far the first choice was the public schools. The results have two particular implications for family life educators and policy makers. First, family life educators who are concerned with the development of parenting skills, both in adolescents and adults, cannot take for granted that parenting means mothering. Second, the moderate income parents in the sample appeared to expect a good deal from public schools, yet many schools lack the programs and financial resources to assist parents in all these areas. (Author/LLL)

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Preferred Parenting Responsibilities and Community Supports in Moderate Income, Ethnically Diverse Dual-Earner and Traditional Families

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Abstract

A number of sources indicate an emerging model of parenting which reflects greater father participation overall and a greater need for community supports for parenting. Ratings of preferred parenting responsibility and community supports in nine parenting areas, from an ethnically diverse sample of dual-earner and traditional families (N=244), provided equivocal results for the model. Although there was a high preference for men's involvement and community support, women and men preferred that women take more responsibility than men. When asked with whom they would prefer to share parenting responsibilities, by far the first choice was the public schools. Implications of the findings for family life educators and policy makers are discussed.

Preferred Parenting Responsibilities and Community Supports in Moderate Income, Ethnically Diverse Dual-Earner and Traditional Families

Recent societal changes suggest that images of motherhood and fatherhood are changing and that a model of contemporary parenting is emerging which reflects men's significant involvement in parenting and women's significant involvemen in providing for the family economically. The present study provides data pertinent to this emerging model by investigating perceptions of preferred parenting responsibilities and community-based supports for parenting in dual-earner families with children and a comparison group of traditional single-earner families.

Changing Attitudes and Behaviors Related to Parenting

Societal changes brought about by the women's movement and altering economic conditions have resulted in considerable variation in the attitudes people hold regarding the range of behaviors, characteristics, and interests deemed appropriate for each sex (Antill, 1987; Spence, Deaux, & Helmreich, 1985). Increasingly egalitarian attitudes and values with regard to work and family roles have been reported, albeit more so for women than for men (Gilbert, 1985; Pleck, 1985; Spence et al., 1985). Large numbers of married women with children are now in the labor force (Evans, 1987) and occupational work is an acceptable source of identity for women (Giele, 1982). Considerable research documents the psychological and physical health benefits for women who have both work and family relationships to use in defining their adult lives (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Hoffman, 1988; Repetti, Matthews, & Waldron, 1989).

Less emphasized are recent changes in the lives of men and the broadening of their sex role definitions. A number of researchers note a shift in values toward men's greater overall increased participation in parenting (e.g., Gilbert, 1985; Pleck, 1983, 1985, 1987). Fathers provide on the average about a third of the child care when mothers are employed full-time; paternal care is used almost as often as family day care or group care centers (Pleck, 1989). Approximately 11% of preschool-aged children whose mothers are employed full-time receive care primarily from their fathers (Lamb, 1984).

Studies investigating psychological involvement and satisfaction with parenting indicate that the psychological significance of family roles to men is higher today than traditionally held (Pleck, 1989). Moreover, considerable research focuses on the father, on how to involve him more in parenting (e.g., Lamb & Sagi, 1983; Pleck, 1987) and on what the effects of his involvement are (e.g., Gottfried, Gottfried, & Bathurst, 1988; Pleck, 1985; Russell, 1982).

Thus there appears to be some consensus about men's increased participation in parenting overall (Hoffman, 1989), and its importance to children's development and to men themselves, although there is less certainty about the degree of their increased participation. Recent legislative efforts are consistent with these views. All state and federal initiatives to provide quality, affordable child care, either enacted or under consideration, include provisions for both employed mothers and fathers (Wisensale & Allison, 1989; Wisensale, 1990). These changes suggest an emerging model for parenting characterized by apreciably involvement in childrearing responsibilities by both spouses.

Parenting

Attention of late has typically focused on child care per se and on who will provide daily child care for children both of whose parents are employed (e.g., Gottfried & Gottfried, 1988; Scarr, 1984, 1990). Our interest was in a much broader assessment of preferred parenting, one which goes beyond daily child care alone to such areas as the child's cognitive development and the child's emotional needs. The literature on two-earner families generally indicates that although both parents are employed, and often prefer this arrangement, they still see themselves as full-time parents despite the obvious need for some assistance. An underlying question of the study, then, was whether parents who described themselves as preferring to share actual child care with others also viewed themselves as preferring to maintain major responsibility in such areas as the child's cognitive and emotional development.

Investigations of such questions required using a broad-based measure of parental role responsibilities. We decided on the Perceptions of Parental Role Scales (PPRS; Gilbert & Hanson, 1983) because the measure is comprehensive, reflects the parental role responsibilities agreed to by both males and females for rearing a child--regardless of the child's gender, and reflects views of employed parents. Table 1 summarizes the parenting areas assessed by the PPRS.

Insert Table 1 about here

The Present Study

A main purpose was to provide data pertinent to what appears to be an emerging model of parenting in contemporary marriages (Thompson & Walker, 1989). Rather then ask women and men about their actual behavior,however, we studied the pattern of responses obtained from women and men regarding preferences for their own and their spouses' behavior. Preferences were viewed as more likely to tap respondents wishes or desires, and thus their underlying expectations for themselves, than would reports of actual involvement. For instance, husbands in dual-wage families may involve themselves in child-rearing activities because their wives are working and the tasks need to be done, but they actually may prefer these activities be performed by the wives and view themselves as child-sitting or helping out. Alternatively, husbands may involve themselves less that then prefer because of the constraints of employers' family policies or work schedules. Nonetheless assessments of current self and spouse parenting satisfaction in the various parenting areas were also obtained to provide an indication of how respondents feel about themselves as parents .

Hypotheses and research questions: (1) Because of the evidence for men's increased involvement in parenting, no differences were necessarily anticipated in the preferred responsibility responses of dual-earner and traditional families with the exception of child care. In this one parenting area, wives and husbands in single-earner families were expected to prefer more and less responsibility, respectively, in comparison to wives and husbands in dual-earner families. (2) Overall,

women were expected to prefer sharing responsibilities appreciably in all areas of childrearing, but how this would compare to men's preferences for themselves was not predictable in light of changes in gender role definitions. (3) Current self-satisfaction in the various parenting areas was expected to correlate postively with preferred self-responsibility scores.

A second purpose was to gather information regarding what societal supports dual-earner parents preferred for particular parenting activities. Such information could be useful in guiding policy makers. A third and final goal of the study was to achieve ethnic representation in the sample. Moderate income families in ethnically diverse neighborhoods were targeted for the study because they tend to be underrepresented in studies of dual-earner families (Walker & Wallston, 1985). However, there was no reason, theoretical or otherwise, to anticipate differences due to ethnicity.

Method

Sample and Procedures

Door-to-door surveying was done in preselected census tracts within the city limits of a moderately sized southwestern city. Tracts were selected to optimize the liklihood of sampling Black, Mexican-American, and White families of comparable income, and because of this criteria turned out to be tracts in the lower income area east of the city. Blocks within tracts were selected at random. Research assistants knocked on the doors of homes, explained the purpose of the study and the criteria for participation, and if interest was shown, left a copy of the survey to be completed by the wife or the husband. Participants

were asked to complete the survey without consulting their spouse. The research assistant returned the next day or at some prearranged time to pick up the completed survey.

Only dual-earner or single earner families in which spouses were married and had children from the current marriage living in the home were included in the study. Dual-earner families were defined as families in which both spouses are regularly employed at least 35 hours per week and single-earner families as those in which the male spouse is regularly employed at least 35 hours a week and the female spouse is not regularly employed. Approximately one fourth of the homes visited met the criteria. (Many homes in these tracts were occupied by single parent families, older couples with no children in the home, or single, cohabiting or married individuals without children.) Of those home occupants meeting the criteria, 90% agreed to participate and 70% actually completed and returned the surveys. Useable surveys were obtained from 166 members of dual-earner families and 78 members of single-earner families.

Instrumentation

The survey, which required 10 to 15 minutes to complete, inquired about (1) parenting satisfaction, (2) preferred parenting responsibility, and (3) preferred community based resources for assistance with parenting activities. The parenting items used in the survey were taken from the 78-item Perceptions of Parental Role Scales (PPRS) developed by Gilbert and Hansen (1983) which provides a comprehensive list of parenting activities. The authors report good reliability and validity for all the scales included in the PPRS.

The full PPRS was too long for the purposes of the survey and a subset of items had to be selected. Data provided in the manual for the PPRS guided the selection of a subset of items which, according to the manual, had the highest correlation with their own PPRS scale and which appeared to have minimum overlap in content with other items. Table 1 summarizes the number of items selected from each of the parenting scales together with example items. The coefficient alphas for the abbreviated scales were all above .80. Scales were moderately intercorrelated, the median correlation coefficent being .52. For the most part, only 25 to 30% of the variance associated with any two particular scales was shared, indicating that each scale represents a relatively independent dimension of perceived parental role responsibility.

Parenting Satisfaction. Participants used a 5-point Likert scale, which ranged from a low of one to a high of five to rate separately their satisfaction with how well (1) they themselves and (2) their spouse typically carried out each of the parenting activities described in the items.

Preferred Parenting Responsibility. The same parenting items were listed again and this time respondents were asked to indicate "what percentage of the responsibility for carrying out each parenting activity WOULD YOU PREFER be taken by (1) yourself, (2) your spouse, and (3) others." They were instructed to respond to all items even if they did not currently apply to their child and were reminded that the total responsibility should add to 100%.

Preferred Community-Based Resources. For parenting items on which some percentage of OTHER responsibility was indicated, respondents checked whom they would like to provide this assistance. The categories listed on the survey were: "your other children, relatives, paid child care person in your home or that person's home, public-private school, day care center, community center, church, or other" (to be specified). More than one category could be checked for a particular item.

Present Childcare Arrangements and Other Demographic Information. Respondents used the same options provided above for preferred community based-resources, plus the options of the child's mother and the child's father, to indicate their present childcare arrangements for preschool care and after school care. The category, child watches self, was also added to the options for a school-age child.

Data were also gathered with regard to sex, ethnicity, age and number of children, total family income, number of years married, marital status, level of education, employment status of self and spouse, and number of hours employed per week.

The dual-earner and traditional families did not differ significantly in age of spouses, age and number of children, number of years married, total family income, or level of ecuation. On the average spouses in both types of intact families were in their early to mid-thirties, married to their present partner 10-15 years, and had two to three children living in the home. Mexican-American families and Black families averaged three or more children and White families averaged less than two children. Nearly 70% of the respondents'

children were less than 14 years old and, of these, approximately 30% were 5 years old or less.

Total family income, which was reported in interval categories that ranged from less than $5,000 to more than $55,000, fell in the middle category of $15,000 to $24,999 for 43% of the families, and in the middle three categories of $10,000 to $40,000 for 86% of the families. Thus, as anticipated, families were moderate in income. The median level of education across both types of families was a high school diploma or its equivalent plus some college. Nearly all White and Black participants had completed high school, but only 70% of Mexican-American participants had. Men in traditional and dual-earner families worked significantly more hours per week than did women in dual-earner families (44.9, 44.5, and 40.9 hours, respectively). However, these three groups of employed respondents did not differ in educational level or work aspirations.

With regard to childcare, dual-earner families used an average of 32.0 hours/week of day care for preschoolers and 12.8 hours/week of afterschool care for school-aged children. For preschoolers, approximately 25% of dual-earner families used day care or a preschool program, 25% a paid person in that person's home, 25% scheduled work so that the other parent did childcare, and 25% used relatives or the child's siblings. Mexican-American families least used day care centers or a paid person in that person's home and most used relatives or other siblings. Black families reported a higher use of family members and a lower use of day care centers than did White families. For afterschool care few families used any type of paid arrangement. Children either

were with one of the two parents (35%), by themselves or with friends in the neighborhood (20%), at an after school day care center or program (15%), or with relatives/their own siblings (20%).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

The analyses performed were in some ways dictated by the reality of our sample. There were more dual-earner respondents (N = 166, 98 female and 68 male) than single earner respondents (N = 78, 48 female and 30 male) and the ethnic breakdown across type of family differed as well. The proportion of Black participants was higher among dual-earner families (26.5% or 44) than traditional families (12.8% or 10) and the proportion of White participants lower among dual-earner (50% or 83) than traditional families (60.3% or 47). The proportion of Mexican American participants was approximately 25% in each type (Ns of 39 and 21, respectively).

Because of the small cell sizes which resulted when respondents were broken down by sex (female or male), type of family (traditional or dual-earner), and ethnicity (Anglo, Black, and Hispanic), 3-way analyses were not advisable. Instead two-way analyses in which sex of respondent and type of family were the classifier variables were performed. Two-way ANOVAs with ethnicity and type of family were also performed. Because very few significant effects occurred or were anticipated, these results are not reported.

Finally, MANOVAs performed in analyses for the nine parenting scales also are not reported (footnote 1); the statistical package used excluded subjects who had missing data on any one of the nine scales,

further reducing what was already a modest N. Thus, due caution is used in reporting the results from the separate two-way ANOVAs and only comparisons which showed significant effects across a number of the parenting scales are interpreted.

Self and Spouse Preferred Parenting Responsibility

Comparisons of Dual-Earner and Traditional Single-Earner Families. Two-way sex by type-of-family ANOVAs were computed on (a) the preferred parenting responsibility scores for Self and (b) the preferred parenting responsibility scores for Spouse. As can be seen from Table 2, no significant main effects or interactions due to type of family occurred in either of these sets of analyses. Thus the two types of families appeared to be similar in their preferences for who carries out the various parenting responsibilities.

Insert Table 2 about here

Comparisons of Women and Men. Significant differences between women and men occurred for five of the nine parenting scales on scores of preferred self-responsibility. Women preferred to take a greater proportion of the parenting responsibility, about 45% to 50%, in the areas of teaching the handling of emotion (HE) and personal hygiene (PeH), child care (CC), and meeting the child's emotional needs (EN), compared to men's 38% to 42% for HE, PeH, and EN, and 33% for CC. Men preferred more self-responsibility than women in the area of teaching physical health (PhH)--39% vs. 31%, respectively. No differences in

preferred self-responsibility occurred in the areas of teaching the child social skills (SoS), norms and values (N&V), and survival skills (SuS), where both spouses preferred close to 40%, and teaching the child cognitive skills (CD), where both preferred about 32%.

For preferred spouse responsibility, significant differences between women and men occurred on eight of the nine scales (see Table 2). Men preferred their spouse to take 5%-6% more responsibility than women preferred their spouse to take. (For men, the percentage preferred for their spouse ranged from 31%, for PhH, to 53%, for CC; for women, they ranged from 26%, for CD, to 40%, for EN.) This was true for all areas except survival skills (SuS), where both indicated about 40%; physical health (PhH), where men preferred their spouse to take about 31% and women wanted their spouse to assume close to 35%; and child care. Child care (CC) was the only area in which men preferred their spouse to take more responsibility than women said they preferred, and the only area in which either spouse apportioned more than 50% of the responsibility (the next highest was 46%, the proportion men preferred their spouse to take for PeH and EN).

Looking at the data on CC from two-earner families, women preferred to assume about 47% and preferred their spouse to take about 32% and others about 21%. Men preferred taking about 32%, having their spouse take about 53% and others about 15%. (For traditional families women preferred to take 52.5% and men preferred spouses to take 53.5%.) For CC, considerable variance occurred in the responses of women's self-preference and men's spouse preference suggesting a greater range of responses in the area of child care than in any other of the eight

areas inquired about. This higher variation likely accounts for why the predicted significant interaction failed to occur.

Self and Spouse Parenting Satisfaction

Two-way sex by type-of-family ANOVAs were computed on the parenting satisfaction scores (a) for Self and (b) for Spouse. These results are reported only briefly. Satisfaction was assessed in the study to provide an indication of how respondents feel about themselves as parents and to provide a test of the hypothesis that preferred self-responsibility scores would correlate positively with self-satisfaction . Respondents rated current parenting satisfaction in all nine areas with regard to themselves as parents and their spouse as parents.

Very few main effects or two-way interactions occurred due to type of family. In contrast, a number of main effects due to sex occurred. Women generally reported higher self-satisfaction with their parenting than men reported for their parenting. Similarly, women consistently reported less satisfaction with their spouse's parenting than men reported for their spouse's parenting. Despite these differences, both types of families' ratings for self and spouse reflected moderate to high parenting satisfaction. Item mean ratings for the scales ranged from 2.86 to 4.68; only one mean was less than the scale midpoint of 3.0 and most were between 3.3 and 4.5. (Scale scores were divided by the number of items on each scale; responses to each item could range from a low of one to a high of five.)

Correlations Between Preferred Self-Responsibility and Self-Satisfaction

Table 3 presents the correlations between self-satisfaction and preferred self-responsibility separately for women and men in traditional and dual-earner families. As anticipated, for both sexes the correlations are all positive with the one exception of SuS for women in traditional families. Thus, the more parenting responsibility preferred by men and women in the various parenting areas, the higher their current satisfaction in these areas. The patterns of correlations for the two types of families were quite similar, particularly for the female respondents. For males, the magnitude of the correlations was somewhat higher for men in traditional families than for men in dual-earner families. For both types of families the magnitude of the correlations for childcare (CC) was among the highest for women (.54 dual-earner and .51 traditional) and among the lowest for men (.19 and .22, respectively), indicating that in this parenting area male satisfaction is not particularly related to preferred responsibility.

Preferred "Other" Responsibility

Respondents were asked how much responsibility for each parenting area they would prefer OTHERS to take and who they would prefer this other to be. Because traditional families may seek out assistance with parenting for different reasons than dual-earner families, comparisons of the responses by type of family were not made.

Insert Tables 3 and 4 about here

Table 4 summarizes the average percent responsibility respondents in dual-earner families preferred Others to assume and who these Others were. Except for CC, the responses of women and men did not differ. Highest percentages occurred in the areas of teaching cognitive skills (CD) and physical health (PhH) where parents wanted mostly the schools to take 34-40% of the responsibility. The lowest percentages, 13-16%, were in the areas of teaching norms and values and personal hygiene and meeting the child's emotional needs. The percentage for child care was 18.8%, but women preferred more assistance than men--21.7% vs 15.4%. (It will be recalled that most families had school-aged children.)

When asked with whom they would prefer to share parenting responsibilites--the church, community centers, day-care centers, public/private schools, paid person in their home, relatives, or other children--by far the first choice was the school, particularly for teaching cognitive skills (CD), physical health (PhH), social skills (SoS), and survivial skills (SuS). Second and third most preferred were relatives and the church, and day-care centers. For child care, preference was quite equally divided between the schools, relatives, and day care centers

Discussion

Before considering the findings and their possible implications, the limitations of the project must be noted. First, the final sample was modest in size and contained relatively few Black respondents, particularly in traditional families. The data are all self-report and thus are subject to the usual biases regarding response sets and social desirability. Men and women were asked what they preferred to do as

parents, not what they actually do. Thus there is no way of knowing whether respondents are already doing what they would prefer to do, what prevents them from doing what they would prefer to do, and if the opportunity presented itself, whether they would indeed do what they say they would prefer to do. Also the data are from a single time point and thus cannot directly inform us about how preferences may have changed or be changing. These crucial questions clearly must be addressed as researchers continue in their efforts to understand the parenting process in contemporary families.

Preferred Responsibility

The results provide equivocal support for the contemporary model of parenting described by Pleck (1987) and others. On the one hand, both types of families apportioned sizable amounts of preferred responsibility to both parents and to community-based resources, and not primarily to mothers. With the exception of teaching the child cognitive skills and physical health, where public and private schools were apportioned a sizable percentage of responsibility in both types of families, most responsibility for the various parenting areas was apportioned to the parents themselves, however.

Indications of traditional patterns were not totally absent. Gender differences persisted throughout the data and no real differences occurred by type of family. Gender differences in Preferred Self-Responsibility occurred on five of the nine parenting scales. Women in both types of families generally preferred to take 5%-10% more responsibility than they preferred their spouse to take, and in four areas men agreed. Two of these four concerned the more affective and

emotional aspects of childrearing--handling of emotions (HE) and meeting the child's emotional needs (EN). The remaining two also represent areas historically associated with women's abilities--teaching personal hygiene (PeH) and providing daily child care (CC). The only area in which men preferred more responsibility than women preferred was teaching physical health (PhH), again an area associated with traditional male abilities.

Juxataposed to these patterns are the findings for Preferred Spouse Responsibility. Gender differences occurred on eight of the nine parenting scales, with men apportioning more responsibility to spouses than women apportioned to spouses. Thus, although men preferred to assume a sizable percentage of parenting responsibility, as indicated by their self-responsibility responses, they also preferred that women take somewhat more responsibility than themselves. Women's responses for preferred self and spouse responsibility indicate they are in agreement.

The area of providing daily child care appeared unique among the nine areas assessed. More variability occurred in responses on this scale than on any other scale indicating that parents were in less agreement about what they preferred. This also was the only one of the nine parenting areas in which women in dual-earner families preferred to take less responsibility than men preferred spouses to take (46% vs. 53%). Men and women both preferred men to take on about 32% of the parenting responsibility but women preferred to take less responsibility and have Others take on more, whereas men preferred that women take on more and Others take on less. Moreover, the correlations between self-responsibility and preferred self-responsibility in each of the

parenting areas was highest for women in the area of child care (.54) but second lowest for men (.19). Thus, although men see themselves as obtaining considerable parenting satisfaction and preferring to take considerable responsibility as parents, this seems to extend less to daily child care than to other parenting behaviors. The generally positive correlations between ratings of preferred self-responsibility and self-satisfaction support this interpretation.

The school was the most preferred community-based resource for parenting of dual-earner (and traditional) respondents and was preferred in nearly every parenting area. Paid child care facilities were low on the list of preferred Others, being selected only 17% of the time by dual-earner families and less often than other relatives and the church. Parents clearly expect a good deal from the schools and relatively little from child-care facilities--even though nearly half the child care actually used by parents for preschool care was paid child care. These findings likely reflect a characteristic of the populations sampled, namely that it was low and moderate in income and likely could not afford to enroll children in well-run daycare programs. Low preferred use of day care is an economic factor as well as an emotional one (Gottfried & Gottfried, 1988). Nonetheless, these data indicate that moderate income families preferred assistance from the schools in all the parenting areas and expect a great deal from the schools in the areas of cognitive development, physical health, and survival skills. Since most families in the sample were not college educated, parents may have looked to the schools to prepare their children in areas where they themselves felt more limited.

Implications for Educators and Policy Makers

Our results have two particular implications for family life educators and policy makers. First, family life educators who are concerned with the development of parenting skills, both in adolescents and adults, cannot take for granted that parenting means mothering. These results coupled with those of others (e.g., Bronstein & Cowan, 1988; Gilbert, 1985; Pleck, 1987) suggest that increasing numbers of men are changing their self-views as fathers and desire considerable involvement with their children, regardless of wives' employment, even though this involvement may not mean parity. Related to these changing self-views is the importance of teaching young adults, particularly male, to anticipate the integration of occupational and family roles and to be prepared for the restraints and trade-offs which parenting requires. Moreover, men's (and women's) ability to involve themselves with children will greatly depend on the policies of their employers (Aldous, 1990).

A number of writers have suggested that the persistence of gender specialization across the domains of marriage, work, and parenthood may have more to do with the structure of occupations and the policies of employers than with the choices of individual women and men (Thompson & Walker, 1989). An increasing degree of control over women's daily labor is held by employers, not husbands (Brown, 1987). Although there have been some changes in employee benefits (Nieva, 1985; Walker, Rozee-Koker, & Wallston, 1987), innovations such as on-site childcare, parental leave (as opposed to maternal leave), and flex-time are far from the norm and only a small number of states have actually passed

relevant legislation in these areas (Wisensale & Allison, 1989). Family educators need to help bring about family-responsive policies which would allow both employed women and men to be actively involved as parents. It may be the case, for example, that men in our study were reluctant to take on more responsibility in the area of daily child care because employers would disapprove of male employees who show involvement with their children or because employers more readily offer benefits or options to women than to men.

Second, the moderate income parents in this sample appeared to expect a good deal from public schools. At the same time many schools lack the programs and financial resources to assist parents in all these areas. A case in point is after school care. Few families among those surveyed used any type of paid arrangment for afterschool care. A large percentage of school-aged children stayed by themselves or with friends in the neighborhood or with their siblings. Studies consistently report that at least 30% of all children in junior high school regularly care for themselves after school (Seligson & Fink, 1989).

A two-pronged approach is currently being taken in this area. Project Home Safe, a national outreach program designed to assist families and their school-age children, provides information to parents and communities (for information call 1/800/252/SAFE). Taking a different tack, the School-age Child Care Project at Wellesley College Center for Research on Women has developed an action agenda for school-age child care (Seligson & Fink, 1989) to address the scarity of quality, affordable programs and their development in association with the public schools.

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Footnotes

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1. MANOVAs indicated significant sex differences but the Ns were too reduced in size to be meaningful.

Table 1

Parenting Domains and Items from the PPRS Included on the Survey Form

Parenting Domain	# of items	Examples of items
Teaching:		
Cognitive Development (CD)	3	1. Teach child reading, writing, arithmetic. 2. Answer child's why questions.
Handling of Emotions (HE)	3	1. Teach child sensitivity to feelings of others. 2. Help child understand his or her sexuality.
Social Skills (SoS)	3	1. Teach child how to handle winning and losing. 2. Teach child to get along with others--to compromise, phase, negotiate.
Norms and Values (N&V)	3	1. Teach child honesty. 2. Help child develop a set of values or a personal code of ethics to live by.
Physical Health (PhH)	3	1. Show child how to play basic sports. 2. Teach child the importance of physical exercise.
Personal Hygiene (PeH)	2	1. Teach child good habits for eating. 2. Make sure child develops good dental care habits.
Survival Skills (SuS)	3	1. Teach child to shop for and prepare basic foods. 2. Teach child basic first aid practices.
Basic Needs:		
Meeting the Emotional Needs of the Child (EN)	3	1. Make child feel important. 2. Give child attention such as holding child or expressing affection.
Child Care (CC)	5	1. Provide daily care for preschool-age child. 2. Provide after school care for school-age child.

Table 2

Summary of Two-Way Analysis of Variance Comparisons of Men and Women in Dual-Worker and Traditional Families on Preferred Self and Spouse Responsibility

Parenting Scales	Preferred Self Responsibility			Preferred Spouse Responsibility		
	Family Main Effect F	Gender Main Effect F	Interaction	Family Main Effect F	Gender Main Effect F	Interaction
CD	.26	.13	.12	.18	15.25***	.08
HE	.24	5.86*	.85	.01	20.88***	.00
SoS	2.85	.06	2.81	.51	5.44*	.64
N&V	.32	.02	2.60	.05	11.08***	.11
PhH	.01	16.35***	.02	.51	3.99*	1.18
PeH	.14	38.23***	.86	.14	53.54***	.11
SuS	.62	.54	3.57	.20	2.62	.59
EN	.22	11.24***	.42	.17	24.65***	.78
CC	2.65	26.56***	.05	1.01	72.06***	1.09

Note: There were 98 female and 68 male respondents from dual-worker families and 48 female and 30 male respondents from traditional families.

CD, Cognitive Development; HE, Handling of Emotions: SoS, Social Skills; N&V, Norms and Values, PhH, Physical Health; PeH, Personal Hygiene, SuS, Survival Skills; EN, Meeting the Emotional Needs of the Child; CC, Child Care.

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$
***$p < .001$

Table 3

Correlations Between Self-Satisfaction Scores and Self-Responsibility Scores on the Parenting Scales

	Women		Men	
Parenting Scales	Dual-Earner	Traditional	Dual-Earner	Traditional
CD	.22*	.15	.31*	.41*
HE	.22*	.25	.34*	.45*
SoS	.26*	.24	.26	.24
N&V	.07	.16	.27	.26
PhH	.60**	.51**	.23	.39*
PeH	.28*	.22	.34*	.71**
SuS	.24	-.40**	.09	.41*
EN	.10	.14	.38*	.64**
CC	.54**	.51**	.19	.22

Note: Ns differed somewhat for the various correlations. Total N was 98 female and 68 male dual-earner and 48 female and 30 male traditional.

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table 4

Dual-Earner Families: Summary of Data Pertaining to "Others" (Community-Based Resources) Preferred for the Parenting Areas

Parenting Areas	Mean % Preferred Resp. Assigned to "Others"	Two most frequently checked categories for "Others" (%[a])		
		Public/Priv School	Church	Relatives
Teaching				
CD	39.5%	(47%)		(15%)
PhH	33.6%	(47%)		(14%)
SoS	21.9%	(35%)	(17%)	(18%)
SuS	20.0%	(45%)		(22%)
HE	17.0%	(35%)	(19%)	(19%)
N&V	16.2%	(34%)	(23%)	(20%)
PeH	15.2%	(45%)		(20%)
Basic Needs				
CC	18.8%	(27%)		(22%)
EN	13.2%	(27%)	(16%)	(27%)

[a]Within each parenting area, the "Other" categories receiving the highest proportion of checks. The percentage given corresponds to the number of times a particular "Other" category was checked divided by the total number of checks for that parenting area x 100.